



President's message

With June nearly here, those of us with school children know that soon those learned little loved ones will be home for the summer. I love my children Samuel, Abigail, Zachariah, and Michaiah. They are so much fun to be around and they find all sorts of ways to surprise my wife, Rebecca, and I. Whether it's time spent reading a book, playing in the yard, or helping with chores, their actions and antics can be amazing at times. Now where do they learn all those things? Certainly some of it comes from their friends and playmates. Hopefully the good things they do originate from their parents' influence.

How much did your parents influence you? Who was your greatest influence or inspiration? Was it aunts or uncles or siblings or grandparents? Or was it teachers and other leaders in your community? Whoever it was, remember that you, too, may be an influence to youngsters around you.

In this newsletter we will explore the literary arts, books, and the people who inspired them.

As a youngster I read the original book on Luke Swetland's captivity by the Seneca that Luke had penned himself over 200 years ago which my father still has. But I was recently inspired to re-read Edward Merrifield's rendition of Luke's story due to new book, one that was inspired, in part, by Merrifield's book. It is a historical fiction, mystery thriller set in modern times but with so many references and ties back to actual places, people, and events that it blurs the lines between truth and fiction. It is called the *Crown of Serpents* and is written, illustrated and published by Michael Karpovage of Karpovage Creative, Inc.

In addition to Luke Swetland, other Swe(e)/(a)tlands, such as Ernest John Sweetland, have also inspired books. This man was an incredible inventor, company owner, family man, artisan and more. He was responsible for the invention of many things including the cartridge style oil filters used on automobiles today and the cast-dryers used in hospitals for decades. His long influential life led to a book about his life, inventions and art by Dale Z. Kirby.

So I encourage you to pick up a good book to read. Your example may influence the youngsters around you to become readers too. There is a wealth of knowledge and wisdom for them in a few good books and they just might learn more about themselves and their families through those books.

—Jamie R. Swetland

Luke Swetland's Captivity: A Brief Overview

For those of you who have not read of Luke Swetland's captivity in Edward Merrifield's book, you are missing out on a piece of history. It's not just a story about Luke, but a narrative of how he was treated by the Native American Indians, how they lived, and how he lived with them.

The book tells the tale of Luke's capture by members of the Seneca Nation. It also tells of his tumultuous treatment as he travelled through different villages. However, because of his honesty and gentle nature, he began to be treated more calmly

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and fairly. In fact, once he reached his final Seneca settlement, he was welcomed in as family.

While most of us would think of winter as being the most devastating period of time for want of food and sustenance, Luke found late spring far more difficult. For the autumn harvests had bunkered enough food for the Senecas and Luke to survive the winter. It was when those stores had been depleted and new crops had not yet begun to produce that they nearly starved. Only Luke's strong faith in God, along with his virility and determination to see his family once again, kept him going and eventually inspired him to make it back home.

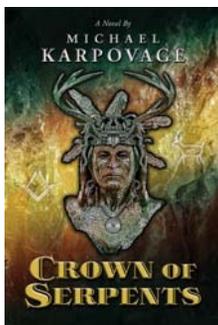
It was through Luke's 'inside' knowledge of the life of the Senecas and their villages that he became a key guide to General Sullivan and General Clinton as they wielded their destruction upon the Native Americans in the Pennsylvania and New York territories. While generally considered a great American victory, it led to the eventual 'Trail of Tears' and many Indian lives were lost as a result.

Remember the Native Americans had become outraged at their lands and homes being 'over run' by the newly-come white man. And the British used that to their advantage and coerced many Indian tribes to fight alongside them against the settlers. However, while the British stated they would return Indian lands to them if they helped drive the settlers back to Great Britain, they actually sought to grab the lands for themselves once the revolting settlers were vanquished. The many British-encouraged raids and massacres led George Washington to order Generals Clinton and Sullivan into action against the Native Americans.

Edward Merrifield concluded the book with some facts on Native American life that Luke had noted during his captivity. Edward Merrifield was Luke Swetland's great-grandson through Almira Swetland Merrifield, daughter of Belding Swetland, the first-born son of Luke.

—Jamie Swetland

Author Michael Karpovage Weaves Luke Swetland's Story into Fictional Book



While many authors preserve history, others use that written history as a springboard for their fictional stories. Such is the case with the new book, *Crown of Serpents*.

The book synopsis states, "With the discovery of a campaign journal from an American Revolutionary War officer who fought against the Iroquois Indians, the U.S. Army calls in their top field historian to assess its contents. Jake Tununda, combat vet, Freemason, and half-Seneca Indian, is stunned when he gleans from the journal's cryptic Masonic passages clues to the location of an ancient shaman's crown once protected by the White Deer Society, a secret cult of his forefathers."

Many Sweetland/Swetland Lore readers claim Luke Swetland as their direct ancestor. Author Michael Karpovage separates fact from fiction as he shows how *Crown of Serpents* relates to their hardy forbearer:

FACT: September 5, 1779: American scouts of the Sullivan campaign rescued Luke Swetland in the Seneca Indian village of Kendaia. The Seneca had captured Swetland in Pennsylvania a year before. An elder clan mother spared his life and adopted him into the tribe. After the war, in his memoirs, Swetland wrote that the scouts, mistaking him for a Tory, stole a silver brooch from his shirt and threatened his life. He also wrote of finding a cave in the side of a hill not far from the village, a place he took refuge during the cold winter months of his captivity.

FICTION: In *Crown of Serpents* the scout who repatriated Swetland specifically wrote in his own campaign journal how Luke showed him a secret Indian cave and how they also saw one of the famous sacred white deer of that area. The scout also writes about how Luke "gave" him the silver brooch. This brooch has engraved upon it a highly important symbol that relates directly to the ancient shaman's crown of serpents. In the present day, the military historian discovers a similar brooch that had been stolen from an Indian grave robber in that same area. With the clues from the scout's old journal he ends up on a dangerous hunt to find the hidden crown.



AAARGH! Our True Family Pirate Story

Thanks to others' literary talents, we find stories of our ancestors preserved in print. Stories bring our ancestors to life as they become far more than names and dates-- real people with their own sets of adventures.

My 3rd great-grandfather, Benjamin Sweetland (b. 1788), married Jane Ashton (b. 1781). Both the Sweetland and the Ashton families go back many generations in Marblehead, Massachusetts. This picturesque town on the seacoast once depended on fishing for its livelihood. During my visit to Marblehead after an SFA reunion, I thought of my ancestors as I noted a monument overlooking the harbor, to all the fishermen who died at sea .

In addition to researching my direct Ashton line, I expanded the genealogy to include my other Ashton relatives from Marblehead. I visited the library at the University of Oregon and found a book entitled, *The History and Traditions of Marblehead*. In the biography section the book told of a Philip Ashton's capture by pirates:

In 1722, Philip Ashton was taken by a pirate onto his ship. He suffered from hardship and cruelty of the crew. He finally escaped at an island off the West Indies and in 1725 was taken from the island by a Salem ship and returned to Marblehead.

I decided to find if this Philip Ashton was related to our Sweetland/Jane Ashton line. I discovered that Philip was born in 1702 in Marblehead and that he and Jane Ashton shared common ancestors— John Ashton and Sarah Foxwell.

Further research led to the well-documented book, *Marblehead*, by Lord and Gamage (1972). This book details Philips story:

Marbleheaders never let piracy keep them from the sea, although no one wanted to meet up with the mad villain and pirate, Ned Low. [He] came upon the eighty-ton schooner *Mary* of Marblehead. There she lay, quiet on the Sabbath morning as was the custom of Marblehead vessels and, without a hint of trouble, Captain Low came alongside. At a signal his pirates rushed topside and overcame the Marbleheaders and Low took over the new schooner, renaming her *Fancy*. He released some of the crew, but forced six prisoners, including Philip Ashton, to join his pirate crew.

Philip had months of wild, hair-raising adventures from Cape Sable to Brazil. Later, *Fancy* was turned over to Pirate Spriggs and Ashton went along with it, hiding in the hold to avoid the gory battles and waiting for an opportunity to escape. Finally, at Roatan Island in the Honduras he was permitted to go ashore for water and coconuts. Young and speedy, the nineteen-year-old raced into the brush and hid for five days until the disgruntled pirates sailed away. The joy of escape dissolved quickly into lonely misery of nine months of bare subsistence on fruit, eggs and water and no fire, knife, shoes or cover. The insects and snakes were maddening, but far less dangerous than the bands of marauding pirates seeking escapees. A poor swimmer, Ashton had to wait for a canoe to float in to move to a larger island. His adventures there dragged on for months amidst a group of rum-sodden refugees until the day he spotted several vessels anchored in the lee of Bonacco Island. When a small boat came ashore for water, Ashton overhead those New England accents and threw himself on the mercy of the crewmen of the brigantine whose home port, luckily, was Salem.

Two years and eleven months after his capture by Pirate Ned Low, Philip Ashton returned home to Marblehead as a man from the dead. Parson Barnard held a special service of thanksgiving, and Ashton recounted his incredible tale. True to the tradition of his town, he went right back to sea and fished for most of his life (pp. 70-72, quotation slightly condensed).

Ashton preserved his incredible tale in a book which was published about the same time as *Robinson Crusoe*. However, Lord and Gamage contend, "Marbleheaders are convinced that *Crusoe's* trials never lived up to the real-life adventures of Philip Ashton." (For a more detailed account, enter *Marblehead Real Life Robinson Crusoe* in your Internet search engine. Warning: Don't read this one at bedtime!) —Anne Kirby, ed.

Sweetland/Swetland Family in America Work to Continue

Last year we reported to you the passing of our dear family member and friend Doug Sweetland. As many of you may know, Doug was responsible for collecting, collating, and gathering a multitude of source information into the "big book," *The Sweetland/Swetland Family in America: 1560 – 2003*. It has been a valuable resource for many genealogists and family members alike.

It is the wish of all the officers of the Swe(e)/(a)tland Family Association that we do not let this valuable resource fall by the wayside. We have chosen to continue to maintain this document through our family historian, Roger E. Swetland, along with the assistance of Jamie R. Sweltand.

Please send along updates, new inclusions, etc. to Roger via e-mail or postal mail at the addresses listed in this newsletter and the website. He will collect your input and make updates via softcopy.

CD's Now Available



At this time, the SFA does not have the resources available to print more copies of the book, but we do wish to make it available to all who desire it. Those of you wishing to purchase this resource from this time forward will receive a CD copy of the files that were used to publish the book. Requests for the CD can be made to the historian, Roger Swetland. In the future, Roger

and Jamie will work together to create an updated CD for you. As of this publication, the current cost for the CD with jewel case sent in a padded mailer via USPS is \$6.00.

CD w/Jewel Case = \$1.59
 CD Mailer at USPS = \$1.29
 CD Label & Printing = \$0.99
 Postage = \$1.79
 Tax 6% = \$0.34
 Total: \$6.00

—Jamie Swetland, Pres.

SFA TREASURER REPORT

MAY 01, 2010 by Priscilla Swetland

BALANCE AS OF JULY 18, 2009
 \$1,762.75

DONATIONS:

\$30.00 Scholarship Fund
 \$55.00 Lore Fund
 \$25.00 Reunion Fund
 1 Book of Stamps sent to Mark Harrison for Mailing of Lore



EXPENSES:

\$119.65 Lore Newsletters 51, 52, 53
 \$50.00 Southwest Minnesota State University in memory of Doug Sweetland
 \$30.00 Public Library of New London

BALANCE AS OF MAY 01, 2010
 \$1,673.10

\$770.00 Scholarship Fund
 \$710.10 Lore Fund
 \$193.00 Reunion Fund

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